

TO THE CHOIRS OF THE CHURCH AND PARISH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, TORONTO.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,

When I assented in 1867 to the adoption of the surplice by the Choristers of the Church of the Holy Trinity, I meant, of course, the surplice in common use in the Church of England; and that was the dress assumed, with universal approbation, so far as I have heard.

I have observed of late a tendency on the part of several of the members of our Choirs to depart, on their own authority, from the rule, in respect of dress, agreed to in 1867. I notice the quiet assumption, here and there, of a kind of surplice not seen in common use within the area of the English Church, but only among members of the Latin Churches of the continent of Europe and among the Romanist schismatic bodies in the British Dominions and United States.

The kind of surplice newly assumed is, I am aware, recommended by some of the London ecclesiastical clothiers in conspicuous woodcuts prefixed to their widely-disseminated advertisements; recommended, too, I believe, by engravings in the books called Directories put forth for the guidance of the Clergy by other private persons who have given attention to English clerical dress in different eras; recommended likewise by the example set in London and various rural parts of England by the now notorious irresponsible places of worship, the doings in which have in recent years proved so disastrous to the general interests of the English Church.

But it scarcely need be said that such recommendations as these carry with them no valid weight.

With us in the Canadian dioceses the common custom of the existing English Church has been hitherto our guide; where our local ordinaries or our local synods have not decreed a variation therefrom:—a rule which considerate members of the Church amongst

us must feel it wise and safe to observe in most things, but especially in respect to costumes worn in the public service of the congregation; because costume is a conspicuous thing by which the common eye and mind are pointedly and immediately affected, and any departure from common use therein on the part of individuals ministering gives instant rise to distraction of spirit in worshippers, and oftentimes to misconceptions damaging to the repute of the person so departing, and also to the repute of unoffending persons that happen to be associated with him.

On this ground it is, that I am anxious to say to you that I do not approve of the article of dress which some members of the Choirs in this Parish have of late substituted in the public ministration for the customary English surplice which was agreed to in 1867. By that substitution the impression is unquestionably given to those who are without, and to others, of a desire on the part of some amongst us to look like Romanists.

What Romanist uses are, may, as all know, be seen everywhere in Canada, by those who care to go out of their way to behold them. Moreover, the widely-circulated illustrated newspapers make, in these days, the common eye familiar with the customs of the Latin Churches on the Continent of Europe. Hence any assimilation to Romanist ways in dress or otherwise, on the part of individuals within our communion, is readily recognized; and is commented on to our extreme discredit as a Christian body; for, as all the world is aware, we are not Romanists; and men and women amongst us have no right to make themselves look like them.

From similar considerations, also, I do not approve of the long black underdress which I perceive in a few instances members of our Choirs have, on their own authority, begun to wear. At a glance the garment assumed is seen to be one made after an un-English fashion, giving to the wearer an especially Romanist aspect, particularly when the upper article of dress is thrown off. Figures in this guise seen flitting about our places of worship, either during or after Divine service, are very illusory, and give great offence to members of our own communion and to those who are without; because it is universally known that officials thus habited are not customary accessories of

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public worship with us, but are common objects in and about Romanist places of worship.

Even if the underdress assumed were the ordinary English cassock—it is universally known that the use of cassocks by members of choirs is not in accordance with the normal practice of the existing English Church.

Of course, again, I am quite aware that the authorities already spoken of, as recommending the foreign surplice, urge also the use of the long foreign underdress. But as before: these authorities, as against the normal practice of the existing English Church, amount to nothing with church-people in Canada, who must deem it wisest to take for their guidance in regard to the customs of the mother-church, the rule: not the exceptions to the rule.

Adhering to the recognized ways of the great body to which we belong, we are on strong ground: we cannot be censured even by those who oppose themselves. But yielding to the promptings of individualism, we make our position weak; we are unsustained by those whose good opinion is of value. We moreover repel from us, and from the Divine service to which it is desirable to draw all men, many who otherwise would be fain to worship confidently and devoutly amongst us.

A reason of a lower grade for not affecting the long clothing to which I refer, with a fancy for which some have been carried away, is this:—In connexion with the Church and Parish of the Holy Trinity, large and strong Choirs will always be required. Now it will surely be found that young men generally amongst us will not, for the sake of assisting us in our Choirs, be found willing to assume a costume which is partially feminine in character. Were I therefore to encourage the use of such a costume by adults amongst us, I should in all probability be doing what would seriously militate against the fulness and efficiency of our Choirs in the future.

In regard to quite young children, however, whose aid in Choirs is so desirable and acceptable, the case, I am ready to own, is different. A costume which is unbecoming in the more mature is at once seen and felt to be not unbecoming in the very young, it being in fact simply an ecclesiastical modification of many a little child's ordinary home dress.

I need scarcely add the remark that the circumstance of our several Choirs providing their own apparel does not relieve me from the duty of seeing that the customs in regard to such matters ordinarily observed in the community at large to which we belong, are, as nearly as practicable, adhered to.

The Church of England, of which we are members, in common with the whole of the ancient historic Church, has from very early times recognized the seemliness and utility of a distinction in costume for those who aid her congregations in public worship. The use of raiment, pure and white, by ministrants in her chancels, has been authorized by her. Her custom in this regard has been derived from St. John's vision of heaven wherein, round the central object of all worship, four and twenty ancients, co-equal heads of the old and new Israel, were beheld in such array sitting. I, as you know, very cordially, accept the tradition of the Church on this point, and desire to hand it on unadulterated.

The philosophy of official dress is obvious. The policeman derives moral strength from his uniform; and so does the soldier; and so may the chorister or district visitor. But the policeman who, on his own account, assumed the tunic, helmet, or truncheon, peculiar to another city or distinctive of a rival, hostile force, would discharge the public from the necessity of paying attention to his directions and make himself an object of ridicule.

In addressing these words to you, my sole aim is to prevent, as far as possible, any thing being seen or done amongst us, having a tendency to mar the real respect and kindly feeling which, even with those who through prejudice are at first inclined to be adverse, choirs, powerful and effective like ours, invariably secure to themselves, when affectations and irregularities are avoided.

My simple desire is that whatever is done among us should continue to be done *kata taxin*, as St. Paul would speak—according to a regulation, adopted after due consideration and adhered to dutifully and modestly.

The time is most ill-chosen for members of the English Church anywhere within the world-wide area of its jurisdiction or com-

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munion, to be dallying with Romanist practices, Romanist articles of dress, Romanist phrasology. Why, the ancient National Churches of the Continent of Europe are on the point of discarding Romanism ! At all events, they are at this moment shewing themselves to be more than usually alive to the impostures of which they have so long been dupes. They may, therefore, possibly ere long, do in many respects, what the ancient English National Church did, canonically and rightly, now three centuries ago. They may undertake the work of reforming themselves after the pattern of the early Christian Church, while yet it was really Catholic and one, prior to the division into East and West.

I should be sorry to imagine the condition of light and intelligence of any amongst us such as that the reputation of being Romanist in sentiment should appear to them a thing to be proud of. For what is implied in being Romanist in sentiment ? That a man is *ex animo* ready to be governed by the code in accordance with which at the present moment the foreign national Churches are governed, and under the influence of which they had been brought to the sad state in which we see them : ready *ex animo* to assent to the forgeries and fables of the foreign hagiology : ready *ex animo* to accept as divinely-revealed infallible truths the feigned dogmas that have been attached to the Nicene Creed, some of them three hundred years ago at Trent ; some of them a few months since, on the Vatican mount, the central seat of the mystic Babylon, "with whose sorceries were all the nations deceived : " feigned dogmas, which, in fact, are nothing more than the resolutions of packed meetings of a few hundred persons, many of them notoriously unqualified to think for modern men ; none of them free agents.

One word, ere I conclude, on the subject of a processional cross, for the use of which a desire has been entertained by some members of our choirs.

As all things in the ancient historic Church were wont to be done—again as St. Paul would speak—*kata taxin*, according to a regulation, I desire to have it decided on authority higher than my own, whether or not, simple parochial clergy and their choirs, are by early custom entitled to have the sacred symbol borne before them.

Crosses of varied conformation indicated, as is well known, the presence of ecclesiastics of various grades: one being appropriate to a patriarch; another to an archbishop; another to a bishop; another to an abbot. A simple wand of office, carried before ordinary parish clergy, was and is a thing common enough: was customary, in fact, for a number of years in this church. But whether this wand may, agreeably to ancient use, assume the form of a cross of any kind, I am unable to say. It is a matter for our Synod to settle, not for our congregations, but for the diocese.

Until a decision of this sort, it will be wise not, on our own mere motion, to cause ourselves to be preceded by an ensign, to which, after all, we may not be entitled.

On this head I will add, too, the general caution. It is possible, we know, to use the name of God and of His Christ with glib familiarity, until the repetition of it becomes an offence, the word lapsing into a mere sound, failing to stir, as it ought, the depths of the heart. Even so the sign of the Cross may be secularized and vulgarized until it is profaned—voided of the lively significance which it should have in the eyes of all Christian men. The ancient Church of which we are members has authorized, in relation to each of its sons and daughters, the open and solemn use of the Cross once for all: namely, in Holy Baptism: and by the highest authority it is held lawful to fix solemnly within every place of worship, once for all, a material representation of the sacred Sign. Let no one desire to make common and trite what has been thus religiously limited, without doubt for good reason: notably, perhaps, on account of the superstitions which, as history largely shews, have sprung out of the too free use of this emblem in bygone times.

Believe me, my dear friends,

Sincerely your well-wisher,

HENRY SCADDING.

CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY, TORONTO,
June 16th, 1871.

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